



MAY 2006

Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### May is Mental Health Awareness Month

In observance of Mental Health Awareness Month we have provided you with the following web sites and telephone numbers of national resources that offer a variety of helpful information.

#### Human Management Services (HMS)

Always available to help you or your dependents with any type of personal, family, or work-related concern or difficulty. All HMS services are prepaid by your employer and strictly confidential.  
800-343-2186  
[www.hmsincorp.com](http://www.hmsincorp.com)

#### The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

800-789-2647  
[www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov)

#### National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)

800-950-NAMI (6264)  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

#### National Mental Health Association (NMHA)

800-969-NMHA (6642)  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

## Walking Produces The Same Benefits As Jogging

Running, cycling, or working out at the gym are terrific ways to exercise, but what most people don't realize is that walking can produce the same health benefits as jogging, cycling, or other modes of aerobic exercise. We are convinced that in order to make ourselves fit, exercise must make every muscle ache and leave us exhausted and drenched in sweat.

Certainly good exercise means exerting yourself, but according to the latest exercise science, you don't need to knock yourself out to get fit. In fact, walking is being heralded as the best of all exercises.

#### The benefits of walking

-- Walking can improve cardiovascular fitness just like running. The intensity of running is greater than the intensity of walking. However, similar fitness gains can be made by increasing the duration and frequency of walking. A recent study found a 4-day per week, 40-minute walking program will effect the same cardiovascular fitness improvement as a 3-day per week, 30-minute running program.

-- Walking can burn as many calories as running. Another study comparing walking, running, and cycling showed similar reductions in body weight and percentage of body fat. Running and cycling burn more calories per minute than walking, but the higher intensities of running and cycling can be made up by increasing the duration and frequency of walking. Numerous studies have shown walking to be as effective as running for maintaining or losing weight.

-- Walking can lift your mood and decrease tension. A University of Illinois study found that walking can make people feel happier and more energized. Additionally, the study reported that after a short walk, people tend to feel calm and relaxed. Doctors at Duke University say that taking regular walks will help lift depression, lessen tension, increase optimism, boost self-esteem, and increase energy.

-- There are virtually no walking-related injuries. You may experience soreness if you do too much too soon or walk with poor posture. But in contrast to running, walkers have almost no risk of damaging muscles, ligaments or tendons.

-- Walking requires little preparation. You don't need to warm up to walk. While stretching will increase flexibility by loosening hamstrings and calf muscles, it isn't essential. You won't injure yourself if you don't stretch.

-- Walking is convenient and requires no special equipment. Walking can be done by anyone, anytime, anywhere. All that is needed is a suitable pair of athletic shoes.

-- More benefits. There is no competition. No one will look at you if you are slow or overweight. A variety of joys are available: enjoying woods, hills, seashores, cities, and spending quality time with friends, colleagues or family.

#### Tips for getting started

1. Start slowly. If walking or exercising is a new activity for you, begin walking at an easy, low-intensity pace and gradually increase your distance and intensity.

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186 [www.hmsincorp.com](http://www.hmsincorp.com)

2. How far should you walk? The optimal walking distance for improving fitness and weight control is about 3 miles. If you are a beginner, start with 1 mile or less, and then extend your distance gradually (add no more than one-half mile per week). Always stop before you reach the point of exhaustion.

3. How often should you walk? To improve your cardiovascular fitness, walk at least four times per week. For weight loss, walk 5 to 7 times per week.

4. How fast should you walk? Use the "talk test." To improve fitness you must walk fast enough so that you are breathing harder, but not so fast that you cannot carry on a conversation.

5. What shoes are best? Wear an athletic shoe with a relatively low heel (no more than three-quarters of an inch) and a flexible forefoot. In addition to shoes made specifically for walkers,

many running shoes are adequate. Avoid stiff-soled shoes.

NOTE: It is recommended that you see a physician prior to starting any new exercise program.

#### *HMS is here to help*

Remember, Human Management Services (HMS) is always available to help you or your dependents with any type of personal, family, or work-related problem or concern. All HMS services are FREE and strictly CONFIDENTIAL. If you need help, why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

### **Symptom Checklist: How Do You Know If You're Depressed?**

*There are many symptoms related to depression. Some of these include:*

- \* Feelings of fatigue: no matter how much sleep you get, you still feel exhausted
- \* Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- \* Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- \* Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- \* Sleep problems: early-morning awakening and inability to go back to sleep or difficulty falling asleep at night. Some depressed people also sleep a great deal more than usual
- \* A change in eating patterns: for most depressed people this means a loss of appetite for food and subsequent weight loss. Some people, however, react to depression by compulsive overeating and rapid weight gain
- \* Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, backaches, digestive problems, or chronic pain
- \* Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that you once enjoyed, including sex
- \* Restlessness, irritability
- \* Difficulty concentrating, remembering, and making decisions
- \* Intensified self-criticism and diminished self-esteem
- \* Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts

It is common to experience one or more of the above symptoms from time to time. However, if several of the symptoms of depression persist for more than 2 weeks, or are interfering with your work or family life, you may be depressed. A thorough diagnosis is recommended, including a complete physical checkup and family history of health problems. The earlier you receive treatment for depression, the more effective it can be. And, early treatment increases the likelihood of preventing serious recurrences.

NOTE: Professional help should definitely be sought if a person is experiencing suicidal thoughts.



## **HMS SERVICES**

### **PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS**

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

**Call HMS for Help:**

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